

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 6, 2005

For More Information Contact

VDH 05-04

Holly Tiller, Health Promotion for People with Disabilities Coordinator (804) 864-7891

Charles Ford, PIO (804) 864-7668

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SEEKS INPUT FROM RESIDENTS ON STATE PLAN TO
HELP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

(RICHMOND, Va.) – When people think of someone with a disability, they usually think of a physical disability that can be seen, such as a person in a wheel chair or one with a visual impairment. Actually, a disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities.

The Virginia Department of Health's (VDH) Health Promotion for People with Disabilities Task Force has designed a state plan to enable people with disabilities to lead healthier, more physically active lifestyles. The task force will conduct five town hall meetings this summer to gain feedback from citizens on its plan.

According to the 2000 U.S. census, approximately 19 percent of the U.S. population over age five lives with some form of disability. Sixty-one counties in Virginia have rates of disability surpassing the national average. Counties in Southwest Virginia have the highest disability rates in the Commonwealth.

The task force is dedicated to promoting the health of people with disabilities and to preventing chronic health conditions such as high blood pressure, arthritis and diabetes. The state plan focuses on five areas including interacting with existing initiatives, access to health care, nutrition and physical activity, health promotion and outreach, and data and surveillance.

"We encourage input from citizens about the state plan," said Holly Tiller, coordinator of VDH's Health Promotion for People with Disabilities project. "We aim to mobilize individuals with disabilities, health providers, caregivers and others to ensure that people with disabilities have the same access to the benefits of health promotion opportunities as all citizens."

The public schedule is as follows:

- Portsmouth – July 7, 2:30-5 p.m., Portsmouth Health Department, 1701 High Street
- Warsaw – July 13, 5-7:30 p.m., Rappahannock Community College, Workforce Center, 52 Campus Drive
- St. Paul – Aug. 2, 1:30-4 p.m., Oxbow Center, 16620 E. Riverside Drive
- Lynchburg – Aug. 3, 1:30-4 p.m., Central Virginia Community College, Merritt Hall Auditorium, 3506 Wards Road
- Petersburg – Aug. 8, 4:30-7 p.m., Petersburg Health Department, 301 Halifax Street.

For more information about the state plan or the public meetings, visit <http://www.vahealth.org/cdpc/townhall.asp>. Residents interested in participating in the public meetings should contact Holly Tiller at (804) 864-7891 or Holly.Tiller@vdh.virginia.gov

###